

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 272544

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 ABF-01 FS-01 EB-07 INR-07 AS-01

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R 181415Z NOV 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 272544

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:TGEN, EG

SUBJECT:GOE INQUIRY RE SFCP GRANT ACTIVITY

REF: CAIRO 10991

1. SUMMARY

DEPT APPRECIATIVE OF EMB REPORT OF FONMIN INTEREST IN USE AND MANAGEMENT OF SFCP FUNDS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. WE HAVE ADVISED USG AGENCIES OF EGYPTIAN SENSITIVITIES RE PROGRAM FUNDING WITHOUT SPECIFYING SOURCE OR PARTICULARS OF GOE CONCERNS. WE HAVE POINTED OUT TO USG AGENCIES THE NEED TO EXERCISE CARE IN CONTRACTING TO INSURE JUSTIFICATION OF ALL OBLIGATED FUNDS AND ASKED THEM TO BE SENSITIVE TO NUMBER OF PROJECTS UNDER CONTROL OF SINGLE RESEARCHER

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PAGE 02 STATE 272544

AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS (COPY OF DEPT MEMO POUCHED).

WE WILL WANT TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH GOE INQUIRIES AND INVESTIGATIONS IN THIS AREA AND ASSIST IN LOW KEY WAY WHILE POINTING OUT VALUE OF SFCP. END SUMMARY.

2. GOE CONCERN AND INQUIRIES INEVITABLE AS FONMIN ATTEMPTS TO DEVISE A WAY OF CENTRALIZING INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION, IF NOT CONTROL, OF "FOREIGN SPONSORED" RESEARCH.

THE QUESTION OF HOW TO DO THIS HAS ARISEN IN OTHER SFCP COUNTRIES IN THE PAST AND HAS BEEN APPROACHED IN SEVERAL WAYS.

3. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, HOW TO GO ABOUT CENTRAL COORDINATION IS AN EGYPTIAN PROBLEM. AS EMB NOTED, RECONCILIATION OF INTERESTS OF VARIOUS GOE AGENCIES PROBABLY WON'T BE EASY AND SOMETHING WE SHOULD STAY OUT OF. SOME COUNTRIES E.G. INDIA, HAVE ATTEMPTED THIS BY INTERNAL INTER-MINISTERIAL SCREENING COMMITTEES IN VARIOUS FUNCTIONAL AREAS, OTHERS BY PUTTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERALL PRIORITY DETERMINATIONS IN ONE OR TWO BODIES. EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE APPROACHES DEPENDS ON COUNTRIES OWN BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCY. FROM STANDPOINT OF US INTERESTS, WHAT WE MUST PRESERVE IS SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY SO THAT PROJECTS THEMSELVES CAN CONTINUE TO BE DEVELOPED DIRECTLY BY AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION (USG, GOE) PERHAPS WITHIN A GOE APPROVING OR PRIORITY SETTING MECHANISM THAT ALLOWS FOR THEIR OWN COORDINATION. USG LINKS TO THAT MECHANISM MIGHT BE THROUGH EX-OFFICIO PARTICIPATION OF SCIATT (AS WITH SOME INDIA SCREENING COMMITTEES) OR FULL MEMBERSHIP SCIATT OR US REP ON APPROVING OF PRIORITY SETTING BODY(YUGOSLAVIA, ISRAEL). BEST WAY FOR US TO LINK WILL OF COURSE DEPEND ON WHAT EGYPTIANS FINALLY COME UP WITH; A PROCESS IN WHICH WE SHOULD BE HELPFUL BUT NOT PRESSURING.

4. RESPECTING EGYPTIAN CONSIDERATIONS, WE AGREE WITH LOW-KEY APPROACH. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SHALABI WITH INFO WHERE REQUESTED AND APPROPRIATE AND ENCOURAGE FONMIN TO KEEP US ADVISED. EMB SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE FEELING IN FONMIN THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN SEEING MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 272544

EFFECTIVE USE MADE OF SFCP PROGRAM IN MEETING EGYPTS NEEDS AND PRIORITIES AS WELL AS US INTERESTS (WHICH BY LAW IT MUST) AND THAT WE ARE NOT ENGAGING IN SPECIAL PLEADING FOR ANY PARTICULAR EGYPTIAN RESEARCHER OR INSTITUTION.

5. WHILE MAINTAINING A LOW AND HELPFUL PROFILE, WE DO WANT TO INSURE THAT GOE UNDERSTANDS THE VALUE OF THE

SUBSTANCE OF SFCP PROGRAM. HOW TO COORDINATE AND MANAGE IT BEING A RELATED BUT SEPARABLE CONCERN. IN CONVEYING THIS EMB MIGHT WISH TO DRAW ON FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

A. SFCP PROJECTS CAN BENEFIT EGYPT, E.G. HEALTH (HEW/ONR), RESOURCE(REMOTE SENSING), ENVIRONMENT (LAKE NASSER STUDIES) AS OPPOSED TO JUST INDIVIDUAL SCIENTISTS.

B. SFCP HAS POTENTIAL WITH PLANNING FOR PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPORT TO AT LEAST SOME PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS IDENTIFIED WITHIN GOE BUDGET PROCESS WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE SUFFER.

C. SFCP AND AID CAN BE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE IN SOME INSTANCES.

D. SFCP CANNOT BE "CONVERTED" INTO AID DOLLAR ASSISTANCE. IF SFCP IS CUT BACK OR TERMINATED, LOST SUPPORT OF EGYPTIAN RESEARCH CAN'T BE MADE UP IN DOLLAR SUPPORT FROM OTHER SOURCES.

E. SFCP PROVIDES UNDERPINNING FOR JWGTRD AND JWGMC AREAS. EVEN IF DOLLAR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS INCREASED AS HAS BEEN PROPOSED TO CONGRESS, THESE ACTIVITIES WILL STILL DEPEND LARGELY ON SFCP.

F. FOR MOST US TECHNICAL AGENCIES, SFCP IS ONLY MEANS FOR COOPERATING WITH EGYPT.

G. WE ARE INTERESTED IN USE OF SFCP IN EXTENDING CAPABILITIES OF GOE AGENCIES NOT AS A MEANS OF CIRCUMVENTING BUDGETS, HOWEVER, STRAIGHT CUTBACKS IN GOE AGENCY BUDGETS IN AMOUNT EQUIVALENT TO SFCP PROGRAMS MIGHT
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PAGE 04 STATE 272544

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FUND ALLOTMENT, SCIENTIFIC GRANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: woolflhd
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE272544
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AERICHMOND,JR.
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750401-0273
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751136/aaaabfng.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 75 CAIRO 10991
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: woolflhd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 JUL 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <29 DEC 2003 by woolflhd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OE INQUIRY RE SFCP GRANT ACTIVITY
TAGS: TGEN, EG
To: CAIRO
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006